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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01

AID-05 H-02 AGR-05 SS-15 /074 W
---------- 070690
R 040751Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0658
INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18411

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SNAR, TH, US
SUBJ: IMPLICATIONS FOR NARCOTICS PROGRAM OF REPLACEMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION

REF: A) BANGKOK 16355; B) BANGKOK 14971

1. SUMMARY. MIN. OF INTERIOR ANNOUNCED AUG 29 THAT ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT, ARUN ITSARAPHAKDI, HAD BEEN RELIEVED OF HIS DUTIES FOLLOWING EVIDENTLY UNSATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS OF HIS ACTION IN RELEASING NINE FARMER AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS. THIS POST IS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO THE MISSION AS THE LOCUS FOR PROSECUTION OF NARCOTICS CASES (THIS OFFICE RELEASED NOTORIOUS TRAFFICKER SUKRI). MISSION WILL ARRANGE TO MEET WITH ARUN'S SUCCESSOR, KIAT CHIWAKET, TO UNDERLINE OUR CONTINUING CONCERN RE NARCOTICS PROSECUTIONS.

ACTION SUGGESTED: MISSION SEES VALUE IN ARRANGING FOR AMBASSADOR SHELDON VANCE TO BRIEF THAI AMBASSADOR ANAN ON NARCOTICS SITUATION AS IT AFFECTS THAILAND BEFORE LATTER'S RETURN TO SENIOR MFA POST IN BANGKOK. AMONG OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN SUCH BRIEFING (OR HAVE SEPARATE SESSION) WOULD BE REP. LESTER WOLFF OF NEW YORK, WHO IS IN GOOD POSITION TO UNDERLINE INTEREST OF U.S. CONGRESS IN EFFECTIVE THAI ACTION TO DEAL WITH NARCOTICS TRADE. END SUMMARY.
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2. MINISTER OF INTERIOR BUNTHENG THONGSAWAT ANNOUNCED AUG 29 THAT ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT, ARUN ITSARAPHAKDI, HAD BEEN RELIEVED OF HIS POST. ACTION WAS TAKEN AUG 28 AT MEETING OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION COUNCIL FOLLOWING ARUN'S EXPLANATION OF WHY HE HAD DECIDED TO WITHDRAW CHARGES AGAINST NINE FARMER AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS IN LAMPHUN (I.E., LAMPHUN 9) (REF.
A). ARUN TOLD THE COUNCIL HE DECIDED TO WITHDRAW CHARGES ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE (HE SAID HE BELIEVED THEY HAD BEEN IMPROPERLY ARRESTED IN FIRST PLACE). RELEASE OF ACTIVISTS HAD LED TO DEMON-STRATIONS BY POLICE IN PAMPHUN AND IN BANGKOK. ARUN WILL BE REPLACED AS ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT BY KIAT CHIWAKET, ANOTHER DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SCHEDULED TO RETIRE SEPT. 30.

3. COMMENTS. ARUN'S POSITION HAS BEEN SHAKY EVER SINCE THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT ALLOWED SUKRI SUKRIPHIROM TO GO FREE AFTER THE POLICE CAUGHT HIM DEALING IN DRUGS (REF B). ARUN MAY HAVE SOUGHT TO SHORE UP HIS POSITION BY FREEING THE LAMPHUN ACTIVISTS. THE SUBSEQUENT POLICE DEMONSTRATION AND RANSACKING OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE AND THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY EVAPORATED ANY SUPPORT FOR ARUN FROM THE LEFT.

4. ARUN'S RELIEF PRESUMABLY BRINGS AN END TO THE LAMPHUN 9 CASE IN A COMPARATIVELY SMOOTH WAY, LEAVING EVERYONE EXCEPT ARUN RELATIVELY SATISFIED. THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS POINT HAS APPARENTLY NO RPT NO INTENTION OF RE-ARRESTING THE LAMPHUN ACTIVISTSWM

5. THE POST OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT IS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO THE MISSION BECAUSE IT IS A LOCUS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY IN PROSECUTING NARCOTICS CASES. WE HAVE ONLY LIMITED BIO INFO ON NEW ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL KIAT, BUT MISSION WILL SEEK EARLY APPOINTMENT WITH HIM TO UNDERLINE CONTINUING CONCERN OF U.S. GOVERNMENT IN VIGOROUS PROSECUTION OF NARCOTICS CASES.

6. ACTING SUGGESTED: ADDITIONALLY, MISSION SEES VALUE IN DEPARTMENT'S ARRANGING FOR AMBASSADOR SHELDON VANCE TO BRIEF CONFIDENTIAL

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THAI AMBASSADOR ANAN PANYARACHUN FULLY ON NARCOTICS SITUATION PRIOR TO LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR BANGKOK, WHERE HE WILL BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE IN MFA. AMONG OTHERS THAT DEPT MIGHT BRING INTO BRIEFING OF ANAN MIGHT BE REP. LESTER WOLFF OF NEW YORK, WHO WOULD BE IN GOOD POSITION TO UNDERLINE CONTINUING INTEREST OF U.S. CONGRESS IN EFFECTIVE THAI ACTION TO DEAL WITH NARCOTICS TRADE.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, CABINET, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO18411
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750303-0837
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750981/aaaactzn.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 16355, 75 BANGKOK 14971
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <24 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IMPLICATIONS FOR NARCOTICS PROGRAM OF REPLACEMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION
TAGS: SNAR, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

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